



# INTO DARKNESS

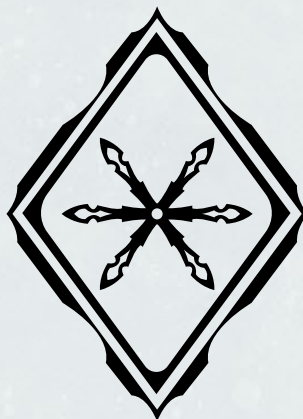
## *A Plague of Ancients Adventure*

Times have been especially hard on the goliaths of Wyrmdoom Crag, and losing the few hunters they have left to neogi slavers will certainly spell their doom. You must delve into the ruins of an ancient city buried beneath the Spine of the World. What secrets lay in the deep dark? Do they promise salvation or doom?

Part Seven of the *Plague of Ancients* Series of Adventures.

*A Four-Hour Adventure for 5th through 10th-Level Characters*

Optimized for APL 8.



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# ADVENTURE PRIMER

*The crags of the mountain were ruthless in the moon; cold, deadly and shining. Distance had no meaning.*

—Mervyn Peake, *Titus Groan*

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th- to 10th-level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range can't participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place high in the Spine of the World mountain range, between the Reghed Glacier and the Ten-Towns of Icewind Dale.

## BACKGROUND

The fallen star witnessed by the **THUUNLAKALAGA GOLIATHS** isn't what it appeared to be: it's a **NAUTILOID** piloted by gnomish **CEREMORPHS** that was chased into one of Auril the Frostmaiden's great blizzards and now lies earthbound.

To make matters worse, the neogi masters of the **DEATHSPIDER** pursuing the nautiloid have arrived. Slavers, the **NEOGI** have capitalized on the havoc sown by the Everlasting Rime—capturing and enslaving whomever they can find. One such captive—a **GIFF** named **LIEUTENANT PROOK**—has managed to escape.

Upon returning to **WYRMDOOM CRAG**, the characters discover that the last of the clan's hunters have been captured by the neogi and must hatch a plan to rescue them from within the ancient **ABEIRAN** city of **XORVINTROTH**. Once there however, the characters quickly learn the neogi are the least of their concerns—the city is festering with **ABERRATIONS** from the **FAR REALM**; long-dormant terrors that threaten the entirety of **ICEWIND DALE**.

## OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread over **four parts** and takes approximately **4 hours** to play:

**Call to Action: Search and Rescue (15 mins).** Old Goat asks the adventurers to rescue a group of goliaths who've been kidnapped by alien slavers.

**Part 1: Descent into Darkness (60 mins).** The characters trail the neogi and their captives into the mountain tunnels, where they're attacked by the neogi rear guard. This is **Story Objective A**.

**Part 2: Xorvintroth (60 mins).** The characters enter the hidden crater which houses the frozen city and explore it for clues. This is **Story Objective B**.

**Part 3: The Bitter Truth (60 mins).** The characters find the corpses of the goliaths they came to rescue and must defend themselves from attacking star spawn. This is **Story Objective C**.

**Part 4: Infinite Terrors (45 mins).** The sleeping denizens of the city awaken, and the characters must flee for their lives. This is **Story Objective D**.



## STORY AWARDS

At certain points in the adventure, you'll see this glyph along with an entry describing how the specified story award is earned or impacted by the story. Ignore the entry if it refers to a story award none of the characters have. If it refers to a story award the characters just earned, it provides information for you and the players.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

Characters who participated in DDAL10-06 *The Fallen Star* learned that a group of goliath hunters have been abducted by neogi slavers. Tensions are high in Wyrmdoom Crag as the clan's chief, Ogolai Orcsplitter ("Old Goat") contemplates what to do next.

In addition to the characters' individual backgrounds, the following hooks are possible ways to involve the adventurers in this scenario:

**Treasure Hunter.** There are rumors of all kinds of civilizations buried in the deep mountains. Those of a scholarly (or avaricious) disposition shouldn't turn down a chance to explore.

**Weird Visions.** Characters with a connection to the divine might experience peculiar dreams of the mountains, accompanied by a subtle urge to investigate.

**Charity.** The people of Icewind Dale have hit on hard times, and the tribal people of the mountain are desperate. You're here to offer what help you can.

### XORVINTROTH, THAT WHICH SURVIVES

Derived from Xorvintaal, the ancient "game" by which dragons wage war and determine power among themselves, this ancient Abeiran city was one of many ruled by dragonborn. It was once a place of learning and enlightenment, but a sect of dragonborn wizards dabbled with sources of magic best left undisturbed. Pulling back the veil of the stars and gazing into the madness of the Far Realm drove the wizards to open portals to the Far Realm. For thousands of years, the city—and the horrors it housed—lay dormant until the Spellplague in 1385 DR when they were expelled from Abeir like a festering infection and transposed into the depths beneath the Spine of the World.



# CALL TO ACTION: SEARCH AND RESCUE

**Estimated Duration:** 15 minutes

## WYRMDOOM CRAG

Ogolai Orcsplitter (“Old Goat”), the aging leader of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths, beseeches the characters to venture into the mountains and rescue a group of goliath hunters kidnapped by neogi slavers.

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Allow each character a minute or so to introduce their character, describe their appearance and mannerisms, and the reason at Wyrmdoom Crag. Be sure to give everyone equal time in the spotlight and be prepared to gently stop people if they run on. Character introductions are crucially important for the players to understand who the other characters are, to build a basis for roleplaying opportunities, and for you, the DM, to learn more about the characters so you can create story elements that really speak to them.

Award **inspiration** (explaining what inspiration is and how it works) once everyone's had a turn.

## A WEARY REQUEST

The characters are summoned to the main hall of Wyrmdoom Crag, a cavernous goliath ancestral home, by Old Goat, who wants to ask for their help.

### OGOLAI (OH-GO-LIE) ORCSPLITTER “OLD GOAT” THUUNLAKALAGA

*Lawful neutral goliath warrior*

The chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that's created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icwind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

**What They Want.** Old Goat's first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She's quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

**Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh.** Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she's getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren't for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would've offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

“All our remaining hunters, captured by slavers.” Old Goat seems on the edge of despair, leaning heavily on her greataxe as if it were a cane. “I have no right to ask this of you, but there's no one else. Help us save our loved ones. Please.”

Old Goat informs the characters of the situation: goliath hunters have been kidnapped by neogi—an evil, insectoid race of slavers from another world. The neogi have taken the captured goliaths into the mountains, and a bold rescue team must follow them into the dark before the captives are lost to the neogi forever.

While this would be cause for concern, the departure of Kaskur Spearsong—the hotheaded hunter—and the hunters loyal to him during DDAL10-06 *The Fallen Star* has only made matters worse.

Lieutenant Prook, the giff mercenary rescued in DDAL10-06 *The Fallen Star*, is present and accompanies the characters to the ruins. One of the players (chosen at random if the players can't agree) can control Lieutenant Prook as a sidekick during this adventure. **Give that player handout 1.** Old Goat seems very happy to rid herself of the giff, as his bombastic attitude is fast driving the remaining goliaths to wonder if they might have been better off not rescuing Lieutenant Prook.

### LIEUTENANT PROOK (LEF-TEN-ANT PR-OOK)

*Lawful neutral giff interstellar mercenary*

Lieutenant Prook (he pronounces lieutenant as “leftenant” and prefers to be addressed as such) once commanded a brigade of his fellow hippopotamus-headed giff mercenaries, but his entire unit was captured by neogi slavers. Of them, he's the sole survivor. The neogi ship recently crashed in Icwind Dale while pursuing the *Id Ascendant*—an illithid nautiloid piloted by gnomish ceremorphs. In the chaos, Lieutenant Prook managed to escape, but underestimated the cold.

**What They Want.** While Lieutenant Prook's immediate goals are survival and recovery, once out of the woods, he plans to find a way to exact his revenge on the neogi who enslaved him and killed his unit.

**Gruff and No-Nonsense.** Lieutenant Prook doesn't waste time on pomp and circumstance; he focuses on his goals with laser precision and those who question his orders (yes, orders) or methods are quick to earn a scathing admonishment. To that end, however, he's loyal and honorable without apology. He would throw down his life to save those he considers allies.



# DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE MOUNTAIN PATH

**Themes:** Mounting desperation, determination. The adventurers make their way into the mountains, toward the goliath hunters' last known location.

Following the directions given to you by Old Goat, you head up into the bitterly cold mountains, toward the distant peak where the hunters were last seen.

The adventurers spend three hours walking to the destination, ascending by mountain paths too narrow and treacherous for horses or pack animals to follow. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) **group** check reduces the journey time to two hours. The group are brought to a stop by the discovery of a deep crack in the mountainside, wide enough to act as a tunnel. Confused tracks around the entrance, spattered blood, and broken spears suggest something bad happened here, and a successful DC 12

Intelligence (Investigation) check confirms that a violent struggle ended with a large group of goliaths moving into the mountain tunnel.

## THE REAR GUARD

The characters proceed down the naturally worn corridor that threads through the heart of the mountain. As they follow the trail, they're ambushed by creatures under the neogi's control!

### STORY OBJECTIVE A

Trailing the neogi into the long-lost city of Xorvintroth is **Story Objective A**.

## AREA INFORMATION

The attack occurs a few hundred feet underground, as the adventurers plumb a sloping tunnel leading down through the heart of the mountain. The tunnel has the following features:





**Dimensions and Terrain.** The tunnel is 30 feet wide and 15 feet tall, with jagged edges and sharp rocks protruding from all sides. The neogi have laid their ambush near four 10-foot-wide stalagmites which obstruct parts of the tunnel at intervals. The stalagmites provide **total cover** for Medium or smaller creatures and **half cover** for Large creatures.

**Lighting.** The tunnel is pitch black. At the start of each round, there's a 1-in-3 chance that a blast of wind from the entrance snuffs out all torches and other flame-based sources of illumination.

## CREATURE INFORMATION

The neogi have left behind a rear guard consisting of a **neogi master** and two **umber hulks** to waylay and slay pursuers.

From behind one of the many thick stalagmites dotting the hall, a reedy voice echoes through the tunnel. "You are now my servants. You have the honor of being chosen for the collection of Xeep'fgthj IV. Prepare to be boarded."

The neogi is surprised, but not displeased, by the adventurers' arrival. It chitters and squirms, telepathically demanding the characters lay down their weapons and assume their rightful place at its feet, throwing spells at anyone churlish enough to venture disagreement. Should the characters defend themselves, the neogi hurls taunts and insults at them—promising what can best be described as a thoroughly unenjoyable existence in the neogi's service. In combat, it freely uses Spider Climb to evade attacks and unnerve creatures.

The umber hulks have been dominated by neogi mind magic but harbor a yearning for freedom. If the neogi is slain, the umber hulks abandon the fight and immediately begin to burrow for the surface, defending themselves and attacking anyone who gets in their way. While the neogi is alive, the umber hulks follow its orders, misinterpreting them to the best of their ability. The umber hulks don't use their Confusing Gaze on the neogi.

## ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These aren't cumulative.

**Very Weak:** Remove one **umber hulk**, and the second **umber hulk** has only 50 hit points.

**Weak:** Remove one **umber hulk**.

**Strong:** The **neogi master** has an additional 4th-level spell slot.

**Very Strong:** Add one **umber hulk**.

## TREASURE

The neogi is wearing an intricate bracelet wrought from stone, clearly of goliath make. It also carries a trinket shaped like a brass spider that emits a faint, musky fragrance when shaken.





# XORVINTROTH

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

## THE FROZEN CITY

**Themes:** Wandering in the dark, silent tension, the slow realization that something truly horrible is afoot. The air in the corridor stirs into a bone-chilling breeze, and daylight can be seen ahead. Rounding a bend, the corridor ends, opening into a vast valley or crater, miles across. The frozen ruins of ancient structures are visible, their uppermost reaches emerging from the snow and ice. Here, the characters navigate the ancient city—learning about it and the truth about the horrors it hides in the process.

### STORY OBJECTIVE B

Locating the goliath prisoners is **Story Objective B**.

Between encounters in this part, adventurers move through the frozen city as they search for the missing goliaths. The first time the adventurers move between areas read the following:

Dark and twisted halls burrow deep into the icy, green stone. Every muffled step through the silent cloisters and empty colonnades seems an ugly intrusion into this still city of viridian glass, frozen into the foundations of the earth.

On subsequent occasions between encounters, you can use the Xorvintroth Visions table to generate strange visions the characters might experience as they move between areas.

Eventually, the cavernous tunnels open up into the steep walls of a miles-wide crater. Nestled in the center of the crater, among aeons-old ice and snow, are the green stone ruins of a strange, ancient city.

## XORVINTROTH VISIONS

d10	Manifestation
1	You catch sight of your reflection in the green stone, and for a moment you see an old face with needles for teeth where your image should be.
2	Are those stars overhead? No, just a trick of the light. No star ever shone with such bleak and hateful malice.
3	A faint clicking sound distracts you for a moment, but fades as soon as you concentrate on it.
4	The green glass all around you seems to shimmer, rippling like water in a breeze.
5	Your vision blurs green for a moment. Did you ever know a time before this viridian dream, before the darkness closed in?
6	A darkness passes over you and then lifts, as if something vast passed overhead.
7	Faint and frozen draconic features stare at you from the glass, humanoid faces etched with pain.
8	The words “We were deceived” appear, scratched into glass in Draconic.
9	Did that mural just move? No, surely not.
10	No vision.

## AREA INFORMATION

The area has the following features:

**Dimensions and Terrain.** The buildings and hallways are all wrought from a peculiar green stone, a translucent but fragile material with the texture and strength of glass, sometimes laid in thin patterned sheets, and at other times in thick slabs. The buildings themselves are spindly and overwrought in delicate, grasping arcs, like waves frozen in motion. Snow blankets the city in a thick, white sheet, closing off some passages and obscuring others.

**Lighting.** Unless otherwise noted, daytime hours provide dim light outdoors, while nighttime hours are dark. The permanent dusk of Auril’s curse makes the promise of sunlight seem a teasing possibility, but the sun never breaks the horizon.



**Sounds.** Xorvintroth is ominously silent, a thick and suffocating tranquility marred only by the crunching and splintering of ice underfoot as the characters move about the city.

**Sinister Chill.** The city is coated in a layer of dense, slick permafrost infused with alien malice. Whenever characters move to new a location in Xorvintroth, they must make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Aberrations and creatures with immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw. Creatures can't gain more than two levels of exhaustion from this effect.

**Strange Murals.** The walls and buildings of Xorvintroth are etched with bold grooves that form pictures depicting the city and its inhabitants, usually dragonborn in dramatic poses wearing robes. These murals sometimes change in subtle ways when no one's looking at them. Characters memorizing or altering the murals as a means of navigation may find their landmarks moved or changed in such a way as to lead them into further peril. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher sometimes find themselves catching glimpses of things moving at the very edges of their vision. These glimpses always prove to be inanimate objects, fleeting shadows, or other mundane misunderstandings. Items, spells, and abilities that measure time and distance sometimes return erroneous results here, due to the influence of the Far Realm.

## GREEN STONE EDIFICES

The city of Xorvintroth contains several different locations the characters might chance across as they search for the missing goliaths. These locations can be visited in any order, and you may use as many as you wish (most groups will visit three to four locations during this part) before proceeding to part 3 when you're ready. As the characters explore each location, you can include discoveries from the tables included with each location to further emphasize the alien nature of the city's past inhabitants.

Among the areas visited, ensure that the characters encounter the statue located in **E. Father Llymic's Shrine**.

### A. ORRERY

This device was once used to predict the movements of the heavens. Now, it lies in the dust as a monument to folly.

Claws of metal lie tangled in the dirt, a snarled and warped apparatus. Even in death, the machinery seems to extend broken talons upward, like a metal hand reaching vainly for unseen stars in an invisible sky.

**Area Information.** The room housing the orrery is 100 feet wide, sheltered by a domed roof with a 5-foot-radius circular hole at the apex. **The orrery** is 20 feet in diameter, half buried in the rubble of a collapsed building.

The orrery was a machine designed to predict the movements of celestial bodies, composed of interlocking metal rings. A character who studies the remains and makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check discerns this purpose. The orrery was once a magical device of great power and potential. It retains some small glimmer of that purpose. The first character to touch





the orrery receives a terrible auditory hallucination, a ten-second-long draconic scream which drowns out all thought and darkens their vision. The sound quickly fades, and further contact with the orrery has no effect. Text in Draconic is faintly visible along the metal arms of the orrery to anyone who cares to inspect it. The word *iskirthos*, meaning “secret star,” features prominently, though much of the rest is illegible.

## ORRERY DISCOVERIES

### d4 Discovery

- 1 A five-foot-diameter orb of dark, heavy metal, inscribed with concentric circles.
- 2 A large, green glass telescope buried in the snow. Anyone who looks through it sees only fractal patterns.
- 3 A calligraphic pattern in Draconic around the inside of the roof reading “A steel sky holds cerulean stars.”
- 4 A spellbook page fragment preserved by the ice. It’s too deteriorated to use.

## B. DRAGON TABLEAU

The adventurers stumble across a strange tableau containing clues as to the nature of the fallen city.

Engravings in the dark-green stone around you speak of many things. Dragons fill unknown skies dotted with dark constellations. Bursts of stylized fire complete the impressive scene, graven into rock by unknown hands and rimed in layers of frost.

**Area Information.** This corridor is 60 feet long, the walls are 30 feet tall, and the ceiling is open to the darkness above. The tops of the walls are lined with spines of green stone.

The engravings on the walls depict draconic creatures in flight. A character who makes a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices many of the dragons exhibit strange qualities such as extra mouths, additional limbs, or membranous scars that aren’t characteristic of the archetypal dragon.

## TABLEAU DISCOVERIES

### d4 Discovery

- 1 A tiny depiction of a wizened humanoid figure with a large, floppy, brown hat, followed by stylized canaries.
- 2 The flames on the pictures contain Draconic letters repeating words in Deep Speech: “No flame can warm me. No words to enflame my soul. We have lost the words.”
- 3 All the rubble here is etched with a jagged spiral.
- 4 The tableau has subtly raised nodules placed at staggered intervals.

The image shows a great many stars in the sky. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check notices the constellations engraved into the picture aren’t those seen in the night skies of Toril.

Any character with an appropriate background such as Sage may make a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check on inspecting the picture. On a success, the character recalls the terrible catastrophe known as the Spellplague, where fragments of another world collided with Faerûn, a world where dragons ruled like kings.

## C. THE SHADOW IN THE ICE

The characters pass a wall of ice, which holds an unnerving prisoner in an eternal vigil.

A vast wall of ice bleeds into view, stretching high toward the bleak skies overhead. It seems to draw your eye, calling you closer with subtle, pressing urgency.

**Area Information.** The wall is built into the side of the dome, disappearing over 100 feet into the dark above, and stretching 300 feet from side to side.

Shining a bright light directly into the ice reveals the umbral silhouette of a creature frozen in stasis. The shape is distorted and wormlike, with many peculiar protrusions, the exact nature or use of which is unclear. A character who makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check works out from the shadows that the creature has a great many curved claws.

Touching the ice forms a telepathic link between the character and the creature inside. The Shadow in the Ice only speaks to the first character who interacts with it and offers that character great and terrible secrets in exchange for its release. It otherwise remains silent. All offers made by the creature are lies, and a character who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check discerns the chilling malice behind the creature’s false promises.

### WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

What of characters who decide to disturb the Shadow in the Ice? Adventurers too ambitious for their own good might decide to destroy the ice (AC 16, 80 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, poison, and psychic damage), or free the Shadow by some other means. In this circumstance, with the assembled characters acting against any reasonable definition of good sense, they unleash a **skittering horror**. The horror attacks any living creatures with extreme prejudice before vanishing into the dark.

## D. HALL OF THE BROTHERHOOD

The characters come across a ceremonial hall that reveals more about the past inhabitants of this city.

Ahead of you, the floor dips into a pit carved from the green stone. Glittering stained glass fragments litter the floor around the pit’s edges, amid the remains of a mosaic that once decorated the walls here.

**Area Information.** The pit is 10 feet deep, 20 feet wide, and 60 feet long. The fresco on the walls depicts the society that ruled this city before it fell. A close inspection reveals



exclusively dragonborn men engaging in a variety of energetic and intimate activities. A successful DC 10 Intelligence check using mason's tools determines this area was likely a bathhouse, or for washing.

The floor of the pool is coated in a thin layer of tough ice. The reflection of anyone who looks into the ice is oddly warped, as if there's something wrong with their teeth.

### HALL DISCOVERIES

#### d4 Discovery

- 1 Hooks line the ceiling, twisting from the glass like corkscrews.
- 2 The upper walls are studded with headless, fist-sized statuettes—symbols of dragonborn virility.
- 3 A sloughed skin from a reptile-adjacent humanoid, frozen into the floor. It has buttons sewn into the seams, as if it was being used as clothing.
- 4 A secret door leading to a chamber beneath the floor that's littered with the ancient remains of burnt wood.

## E. FATHER LLYMIC'S SHRINE

A forgotten shrine to a terrible power occupies a central position in the heart of the city.

The frozen green stone ahead rises into a statue of an old man, bent and wizened. His smile is filled with silvery needles and his eyes are bulbous. A carved lantern dangles from his outstretched hand like the lure of an anglerfish.

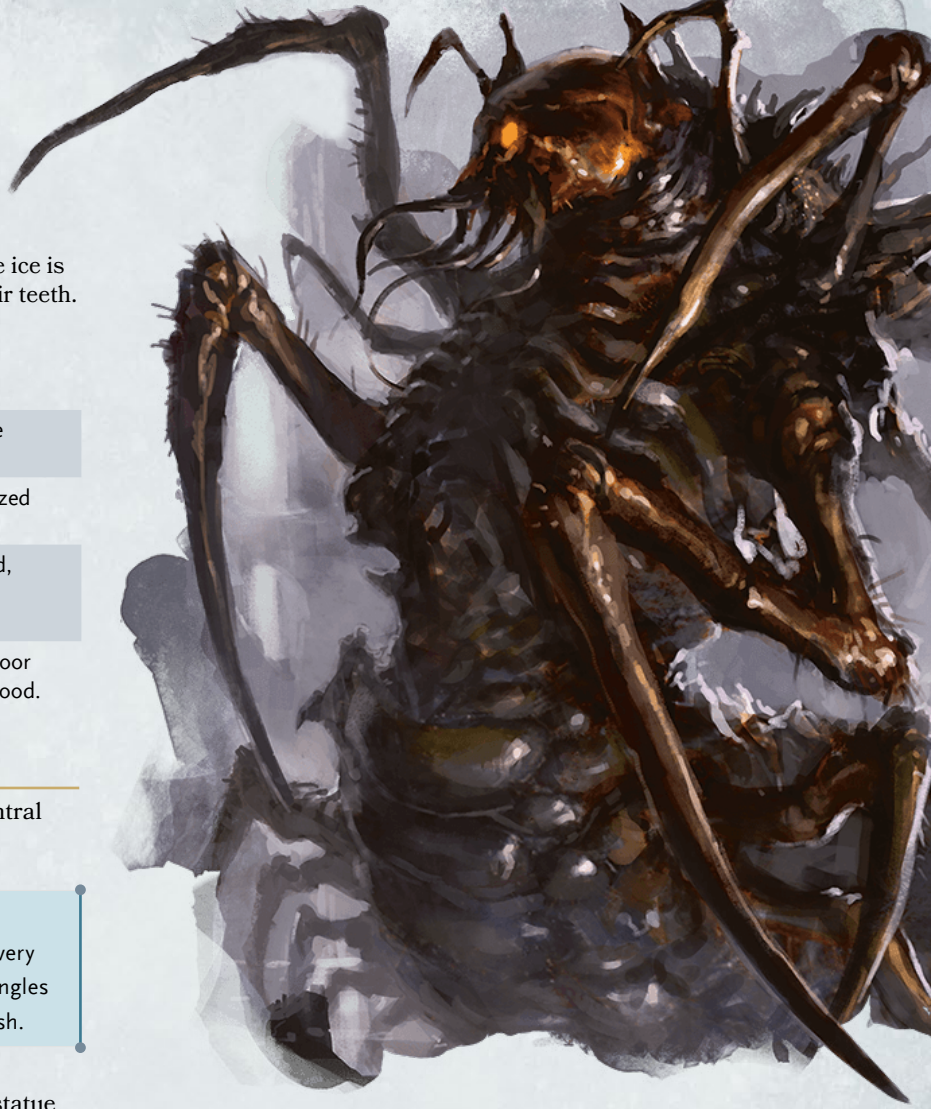
**Area Information.** The courtyard containing the statue is 30 feet square, surrounded by cloisters. The statue occupies the center of the square.

The statue is 20 feet tall and carved from the same strange, green stone as the rest of the city. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check knows this symbology doesn't represent any of Faerûn's many gods.

Words carved along the statue's base in Draconic form a sinister poem:

*"You are cold, Father Llymic," the dragonborn said,  
"And the chill has a terrible bite.  
"A piping incessantly sings in my head,  
"Your presence devours the light."*

Bright light becomes dim light within 60 feet of the statue. Casting a *light* spell (or similar magic) on the statue causes it to split down the middle, falling into two halves and smashing on the cavern floor. If the group lacks the ability to cast such a spell, a character who investigates the statue and makes a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that the statue is hollow and can be physically destroyed (AC 14, 40 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage). Once the statue is destroyed, characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or higher notice it seems to be smiling wider now than before it was destroyed.



Characters with the Spellcasting or Pact Magic class feature feel their connection to the source of all magic falter if they linger near the statue, like a candle guttering in a breeze. Any character with the Spellcasting or Pact Magic class features who touches the statue must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, a spell slot of the highest level they have remaining is expended.

**Treasure.** If the statue is destroyed, sifting through its rubble uncovers a *mace of smiting* wrought from a single piece of obsidian. Around its haft, words in Draconic read "To deny the radiance of the stars is to walk forever in darkness." A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check knows that an archaic, but more accurate, translation would read "Those willing to deny themselves the radiance of the stars would be better to pluck out their eyes and cast them away."

### SHRINE DISCOVERIES

#### d4 Discovery

- 1 The courtyard's flagstones are marked with a Draconic glyph meaning "true father."
- 2 The icy floor contains scraps of old cloth frozen inside it, including discarded cloaks and robes.
- 3 The statue has five more arms, cleverly sculpted to be mostly hidden under its cloak.
- 4 The ice around the statue is suffused with wax and candle wicks, in the manner of a peculiar offering.



# THE BITTER TRUTH

**Estimated Duration:** 60 minutes

**Themes:** Dashed hopes, loss, a veil drawing back. The characters finally find what they're looking for in the shadow of a green stone henge, which comprises seven large shards of rock half buried in an enormous snowbank.

## BEAUTIFUL TREASURE

The neogi deathspider's "away team" along with their host of charmed slaves (the missing goliath hunters among them) are found, destroyed by the alien denizens of the city. These horrible creatures soon emerge to attack the party, who must defend themselves from the onslaught.

### STORY OBJECTIVE C

Destroying the star spawn is **Story Objective C**.

You stumble across the bodies almost as if waking from a fever dream. Limbs scattered across the ice, pools of frozen blood capturing insectoid screams and goliath terror in a macabre diorama. Slavers and slaves alike lie dismembered—there are no survivors.



## AREA INFORMATION

This area has the following features:

**Frozen Bodies.** The dismembered corpses of both neogi slavers and goliath captives are scattered across the clearing. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check realizes this attack occurred very recently, and that the attacker(s) are unlikely to be far away.

**Green Stones.** Three of the henge stones are mostly clear of the snow. Measuring 4 feet tall and 3 feet wide, they provide **half cover** for creatures hiding behind them.

**Slippery Viscera.** Some of the organs and blood have yet to freeze, but the entire area is treacherous in the extreme. This area is **difficult terrain**, and any creature moving through the area faster than their normal walking speed must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

**A Glimpse of Forever.** One of the goliath corpses is distinctive due to their expression, frozen in a rictus of sadistic glee even as they were hacked apart. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the corpse is holding something sharp and glittery to their chest (see "Treasure").

## CREATURE INFORMATION

When the characters are ready to return to the surface, they're interrupted by the reemergence of the star spawn which murdered the neogi and goliaths. This predatory force consists of one **star spawn hulk** and four **star spawn grues**.

The star spawn encountered in this adventure are **immune to cold damage** and strangely chitinous in appearance, with oddly placed mandibles and claws reminiscent of praying mantises, crabs, and beetles.

Characters who understand Deep Speech decipher the star spawn's clicks and whistles—they're calling for their father.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO NARARHAK TREE-EYE?

Characters looking specifically for the remains of the goliath druid Nararhak, who they may have met during previous adventures in this series, are unable to locate their corpse. In truth, Nararhak isn't among the bodies, they met an entirely different fate which will be revealed later in this series.

## TREASURE

The smiling goliath is clutching something in their hands. This **dark shard amulet** is made of ice that never melts and is engraved with the Draconic word *vorelrasvym*, meaning "beautiful treasure."



# INFINITE TERRORS

**Estimated Duration:** 45 minutes

**Themes:** Frantic escape, things best left undisturbed. As soon as the star spawn are dispatched, more chittering and piping sounds from the surrounding ruins indicate that the characters' position will soon be overrun. With nothing left to gain from remaining in the city, the characters must flee to the surface as quickly as possible.

## STORY OBJECTIVE D

Escaping the ruins of Xorvintroth is **Story Objective D**.

## ESCAPE!

This portion of the adventure is a chase; a mad dash to escape the ruined, alien city before being caught—and likely slain—by the star spawn that infest it. To run this part of the adventure, you should refer to the chase rules in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**The Enemy.** At the start of the chase, the enemy force consists of one **star spawn hulk** per character, which manifest 50 feet away from the nearest character and within 30 feet of each other. Each round after the first, on initiative count 20, one **star spawn grue** joins the chase—90 feet behind the rearmost character.

**Complications.** Each party member in the chase rolls a d20 at the start of their turn. Consult the Xorvintroth Chase Complications table to determine whether a complication occurs. If it does, it affects that participant unless they spend inspiration to negate the complication.

**Running the Chase.** A character can escape the chase by starting their turn 90 feet or more from their closest pursuer. The chase ends when all characters have either escaped or been caught by the star spawn. Characters who are reduced to 0 hit points or end their turn adjacent to a star spawn are captured and removed from the initiative order, no longer able to participate in the chase. If neither side gives up the chase, each character makes a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check at the end of each round, after every participant in the chase has taken its turn. If a character is within sight of their closest pursuer, their check fails automatically. Otherwise, on a success that character escapes. The chase continues until all characters are captured or escape.

## XORVINTROTH CHASE COMPLICATIONS

d20	Complication
1	You make a terrible mistake—you look back. Make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw to blot out what you saw. On a failed save, you're blinded until the end of your next turn.
2	The floor is filled with chittering mouths. Make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw to ignore the voices. On a failed save, you're paralyzed until the start of your next turn.
3	A patch of green ice ahead threatens to send you tumbling. You must make a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.
4	Your friends are clearly aliens who want to eat you. Make a DC 11 Intelligence saving throw to resist this delusion. On a failed save, you become frightened of your allies until the end of your next turn.
5	The walls are closing in, the darkness is suffocating. Make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw to resist this hallucination. On a failed save, your speed is halved and you lose any darkvision you possess until the end of your turn.
6	The stones seem to move underfoot, hampering your escape. Make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (your choice) to cross the impediment. On a failed check, the impediment counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
7	You catch sight of something crawling out of a nearby wall. Make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw to focus on your escape. On a failed save, your distraction causes you to collide with an obstacle and you fall prone.
8	Chittering echoes reverberate through the cave, wracking your mind with pain. You must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) psychic damage and drop anything you're holding.
9	A barbed tentacle whips out at you from a nearby building as you pass. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +8 to hit, <i>Hit:</i> 11 (2d10) piercing damage.
10	A sudden drop catches you by surprise. Make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to navigate the icy pit. On a failed save, you fall 1d4 × 5 feet, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 10 feet fallen as normal, and land prone.
11–20	No complication.





**Catching Your Breath.** Characters may wish to recover some of the goliaths' remains to take back to the surface. Any character who's carrying goliath remains is horrified to discover that the dismembered body parts reanimate during the chase, becoming **crawling claws** at the start of the second round (body parts without fingers grow them in the process). The claws focus on strangling their bearers until they're slain or discarded.

**Dead and Buried.** Characters caught by the star spawn, exhausted, or otherwise forced to give up on the chase are slain by the overwhelming tide of horrors from beneath. Unless all the characters are slain, Lieutenant Prook survives the chase.

#### LIEUTENANT PROOK

While the giff is present for the chase, there's no need to complicate matters by involving him. He wastes no time in hightailing it out of the city—leaving the characters in the dust (though he won't abandon them; if the star spawn overtake the whole group, they get Prook as well, during a heroic rescue attempt).



#### STORY AWARD: I SAW FOREVER

Characters who are returned to life after dying at the hands of the star spawn of Xorvintroth gain this story award.

## WRAP-UP: THE PROOK-IAN SOLUTION

The star spawn don't chase surviving adventurers onto the surface, unable or unwilling to step into the cold light of

day. Their chittering and clacking, however, can be heard echoing down from the mountain as the party escapes.

Returning to Wyrmdoom Crag empty-handed is the worst outcome the party could've hoped for, but for now, there are larger concerns at hand—namely a mountain full of aberrations. But with a twinkle in his eye, Lieutenant Prook (presuming he's alive) suggests he knows just the solution—explosives.

## REWARDS

At the **end of the session**, everyone receives rewards based upon their accomplishments:

### PLAYER REWARDS

The players earn the following rewards:

#### ADVANCEMENT

A character participating in this adventure gains one level.

#### OPTIONAL: DECLINING ADVANCEMENT

Each player can decline advancement if they so choose; this has its benefits. It's possible for a character to advance beyond an adventure's level range, meaning they'd be unable to play an adventure as planned. Similarly, advancing too quickly means a character won't earn as much gold as their peers.

Conversely, remind them the amount of gold their characters can earn per level is limited; characters declining advancement might reach a point where they no longer earn gold.

#### GOLD

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it where you see fit. The maximum gold you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

Tier	Hourly GP Award	GP Limit per Level
1	20 gp	80 gp
2	30 gp	240 gp
3	200 gp	1,600 gp
4	750 gp	6,000 gp

#### MAGIC ITEMS

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items, described in **handout 2**:

- *Dark shard amulet*
- *Mace of smiting*

#### STORY AWARDS

The characters may earn the following story awards, described in **handout 2**:

- **I Saw Forever**

### DUNGEON MASTER REWARDS

For running this adventure, you earn a DM Reward. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

### OGOLAI (OH-GOH-LIE) ORCSPLITTER “OLD GOAT” THUUNLAKALAGA

The chieftain of the Thuunlakalaga goliaths is an elderly goliath with a heavily scarred face. She dresses plainly in goat hide clothing and carries an immense greataxe fashioned from white dragon bone. She has a crippling fear of griffons stemming from a childhood trauma that's created tensions between her clan and the Akannathi goliaths of Skytower Shelter (see *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

**What They Want.** Old Goat's first priority is the safety and prosperity of her clan—especially in these unusual and trying times. She's quick to stymie dissent, particularly from Kaskur Spearsong. She fears his disagreements will turn violent, but does everything within her power to delay this apparent inevitability for as long as possible.

**Done It, Seen It; but the End Is Nigh.** Old Goat has been around a long time and seen many things. This experience lends her a tremendous amount of wisdom to draw on when making decisions. However, she's getting old and refuses to surrender the yoke of leadership until a worthy (equally wise) replacement is found. If it weren't for his sharp tongue, Old Goat would've offered Kaskur the mantle of leadership years ago. However, she fears what the clan would become under his leadership.

### LIEUTENANT PROOK (LEF-TEN-ANT PR-OOK)

Lieutenant Prook (he pronounces lieutenant as “leftenant” and prefers to be addressed as such) once commanded a brigade of his fellow hippopotamus-headed giff mercenaries, but his entire unit was captured by neogi slavers. Of them, he's the sole survivor. The neogi ship recently crashed in Icewind Dale while pursuing the *Id Ascendant*—an illithid nautiloid piloted by gnomish ceremorphs. In the chaos, Lieutenant Prook managed to escape, but underestimated the cold.

**What They Want.** While Lieutenant Prook's immediate goals are survival and recovery, once out of the woods, he plans to find a way to exact his revenge on the neogi who enslaved him and killed his unit.

**Gruff and No-Nonsense.** Lieutenant Prook doesn't waste time on pomp and circumstance; he focuses on his goals with laser precision and those who question his orders (yes, orders) or methods are quick to earn a scathing admonishment. To that end, however, he's loyal and honorable without apology. He would throw down his life to save those he considers allies.





## CREATURE STATISTICS

The following creatures appear in this adventure:

### CRAWLING CLAW

*Tiny undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 2 (1d4)

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Common but can't speak

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

**Turn Immunity.** The claw is immune to effects that turn undead.

#### ACTIONS

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning or slashing damage (claw's choice).

### NEOGI MASTER

*Medium aberration, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 71 (11d8 + 22)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Wis +3

**Skills** Arcana +5, Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +3, Persuasion +6

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft. (penetrates magical darkness), passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 30 ft.

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Mental Fortitude.** The neogi has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened, and magic can't put the neogi to sleep.

**Spellcasting.** The neogi is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast* (range 300 ft., +4 bonus to each damage roll), *guidance*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*

1st–4th level (2 4th-level slots): *arms of Hadar*, *counterspell*, *dimension door*, *fear*, *hold person*, *hunger of Hadar*, *invisibility*, *unseen servant*

**Spider Climb.** The neogi can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The neogi makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Enslave (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** The neogi targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by the neogi for 1 day, or until the neogi dies or is more than 1 mile from the target. The charmed target obeys the neogi's commands and can't take reactions, and the neogi and the target can communicate telepathically with each other at a distance of up to 1 mile. Whenever the charmed target takes damage, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

### SKITTERING HORROR

*Huge aberration, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 228 (24d12 + 72)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Skills** Perception +7, Stealth +8

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The horror can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the horror has disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The horror can use its Maddening Presence and make three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d8 + 6) slashing damage.

**Maddening Presence.** The horror targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see or hear the horror, the target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target becomes paralyzed until the end of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the horror's Maddening Presence for the next 24 hours.



## STAR SPAWN GRUE

*Small aberration, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 17 (5d6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (–2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)	11 (+0)	6 (–2)

**Damage Immunities** psychic

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Deep Speech

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Aura of Madness.** Creatures within 20 feet of the grue that aren't aberrations have disadvantage on saving throws, as well as on attack rolls against creatures other than a star spawn grue.

### ACTIONS

**Confounding Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of the grue's next turn.

## STAR SPAWN HULK

*Large aberration, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (13d10 + 65)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (–1)	21 (+5)	7 (–2)	12 (+1)	9 (–1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +3, Wis +5

**Skills** Perception +5

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Deep Speech

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Psychic Mirror.** If the hulk takes psychic damage, each creature within 10 feet of the hulk takes that damage instead; the hulk takes none of the damage. In addition, the hulk's thoughts and location can't be discerned by magic.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The hulk makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target also takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the target's next turn.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

**Reaping Arms (Recharge 5–6).** The hulk makes a separate slam attack against each creature within 10 feet of it. Each creature that is hit must also succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

## UMBER HULK

*Large monstrosity, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 93 (11d10 + 33)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** UMBER HULK

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Confusing Gaze.** When a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the umber hulk and is able to see the umber hulk's eyes, the umber hulk can magically force it to make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, unless the umber hulk is incapacitated.

On a failed saving throw, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during that turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action but uses all its movement to move in a random direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes one melee attack against a random creature, or it does nothing if no creature is within reach.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the umber hulk until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the umber hulk in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

**Tunneler.** The umber hulk can burrow through solid rock at half its burrowing speed and leaves a 5-foot-wide, 8-foot-high tunnel in its wake.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The umber hulk makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its mandibles.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

**Mandibles.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.



# HANDOUT 1: SIDEKICK STATISTICS

## LIEUTENANT PROOK (WARRIOR SIDEKICK)

*Medium humanoid (giff), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 44 (8d8 + 8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Con +4

**Skills** Intimidation +4, Perception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common

**Attacker.** Lieutenant Prook gains a +2 bonus to all attack rolls (already included).

**Battle Readiness.** Lieutenant Prook has advantage on initiative rolls.

**Extra Attack.** Lieutenant Prook can attack twice, instead of once, whenever he takes the Attack action.

**Firearms Knowledge.** Lieutenant Prook's mastery of his weapons enables him to ignore the loading property of muskets and pistols.

**Headfirst Charge.** Lieutenant Prook can try to knock a creature over; if he moves at least 20 feet in a straight line that ends within 5 feet of a Large or smaller creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

**Improved Critical.** Lieutenant Prook's attack rolls score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20.

### ACTIONS

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Pistol.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

**Fragmentation Grenade (1/Day).** Lieutenant Prook throws a grenade up to 60 feet. Each creature within 20 feet of the grenade's detonation must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### BONUS ACTION

**Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** Lieutenant Prook regains 1d10 + 8 hit points.



# HANDOUT 2: CHARACTER REWARDS

The characters may earn the following rewards in this adventure:

## MAGIC ITEMS

### DARK SHARD AMULET

*Wondrous item, common (requires attunement by a warlock)*

This amulet is made of ice that never melts and is engraved with the Draconic word *vorelrasvym*, meaning “beautiful treasure.”

This amulet is fashioned from a single shard of resilient extraplanar material. While you are wearing it, you gain the following benefits:

- You can use the amulet as a spellcasting focus for your warlock spells.
- You can try to cast a cantrip that you don’t know. The cantrip must be on the warlock spell list, and you must make a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If the check succeeds, you cast the spell. If the check fails, so does the spell, and the action used to cast the spell is wasted. In either case, you can’t use this property again until you finish a long rest.

### MACE OF SMITING

*Weapon (mace), rare*

This mace is fashioned from a single piece of obsidian. The following phrase is inscribed over and over in Draconic around the mace’s haft: “Those willing to deny themselves the radiance of the stars would be better to pluck out their eyes and cast them away.”

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus increases to +3 when you use the mace to attack a construct.

When you roll a 20 on an attack roll made with this weapon, the target takes an extra 7 bludgeoning damage, or 14 bludgeoning damage if it’s a construct. If a construct has 25 hit points or fewer after taking this damage, it is destroyed.

## STORY AWARDS

### I SAW FOREVER

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Characters who are returned to life after dying at the hands of the star spawn of Xorvintroth gain this story award.



# APPENDIX A:

## DUNGEON MASTER TIPS

To DM an adventure, you must have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character within the adventure's level range (see *Adventure Primer*). Characters playing in a hardcover adventure may continue to play too, but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they can't return to the first if they level beyond its level range.

### NEW TO D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE?

[https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal\\_general](https://dnd.wizards.com/ddal_general)

### PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception) score, and anything the adventures specifies as notable (such as backgrounds, traits, and flaws).

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a player or DM, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character's adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer) with their starting values for level, magic items, gold, and downtime days. These are updated at the conclusion of the session. The adventure information and your information are added at the end of the adventure session—whether they completed the adventure or not.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they can't, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Players Guide* for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

### NEW PLAYERS? NO PROBLEM!

With starter adventures like this one it's possible you may have players new to D&D, or just new to fifth edition. It's up to you as the DM to ensure they a) have fun with the game and b) learn the basics of how to play. At this level, having fun is more important than learning every rule exactly right. Be gentle with new players who make mistakes.

Make sure to keep your players smiling and rolling dice. Be positive and enthusiastic when describing the action, and you'll notice they quickly follow suit.

If you're a new DM, then welcome—and thank you! New DMs are the lifeblood of the D&D community. This adventure includes sidebars like this one that explain of some rules used as the adventure progresses!

### ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the characters' levels and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

### DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3–4 characters, APL less than	Very Weak
3–4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3–4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6–7 characters, APL less than	Average
6–7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6–7 characters, APL greater than	Very Strong

### SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools ensure that players aren't pushed beyond their comfort levels. They let your players know you want them to have a positive experience.

A broad range of safety tools are available for you and your players online, but for more information reach out to your Event Organizer or to [community@dndadventurersleague.org](mailto:community@dndadventurersleague.org)